

# Health center plans advance

By Shireese M. Bell  
Morning News  
sbell@florencenews.com

The Florence School District 5 Board of Trustees received updates on the district's campus health center, as well as the purchase of property adjacent to Johnsonville High School and Wellman Inc. during its regular meeting earlier this week.

Florence School District 5 Superintendent Dr. Dale Strickland provided information on a general contractor for the

## Florence School District 5

health center project.

According to the state Department of Education, Strickland said, Section 106.5.4 of the State Building and Planning Manual allows a school district to engage in a contracting project of as much as \$350,000 for general contracting and \$125,000 for mechanical, plumbing or electrical contracting.

This regulation allows a school district to be named its own general contractor.

The administration is moving forward on its plans with the district being the general contractor. Subcontractors in the area will be used to help pull everything together, Strickland said.

"We started that process today (Tuesday)," Strickland said in a telephone interview Tuesday. "It's not a major undertaking by any means. I feel comfortable that we can do this. There are a lot of subcontractors in the area that are willing to help us."

The district decided to pursue being its own general contractor after reviewing bids the board decided were too high for what the district was asking.

The center will be 1,555 square feet and will be located on the Johnsonville High School campus. The center is

temporarily housed in a small renovated room in Johnsonville High School's gym.

The center would be the first of its kind in the area.

The district's ultimate goal is to have the center finished by the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, Strickland said.

"We're going to have to do some makeshift parking arrangements at the high school to secure the area and provide a safe work area," he said. "We're going to be flexible enough to make that all coming together."

Strickland also discussed the center's financial statement. He said Medicaid-eligible patients will exceed paying patients by a 2-to-1 margin. The center was approved to be a provider for BlueCross BlueShield this month and billing for that insurance has begun.

Board member Holly Wall was researching the property and found the land to be a remaining part of a larger tract, which had been sold in pieces and never properly probated.

Strickland said the district is

**See CENTER, 2B**

## CENTER

Continued From 1B

working on completing the necessary paperwork and hopes to close on the property next week. During this time, the custodial staff will be moved to the house on that property until renovations are completed on the current location of the custodial work area.

Strickland also told the board a Canadian company is no longer interested in purchasing Wellman's MRD facility, but other companies are.

He said the district will lose \$240,000 in revenue with the closing of the facility. If a company bought the facility, it would help offset some of the revenue loss.

"So much is riding on what happens with Wellman Inc. for the school district as well as the town," Strickland said. "We're trying to calculate what our future holds as far as tax revenue."

Wellman Inc. announced in September it was ending its fiber operations in Johnsonville, which put 360 people out of work.

Florence  
Morning News  
Florence, SC  
Circ. 34999  
From Page:  
b1  
3/28/2007  
61050

